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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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## India test-fires Pralay missiles

**NEW DELHI, 31 DEC**

India on Wednesday test-fired two Pralay missiles off the coast of Odisha. The indigenously built quasi-ballistic missile features state-of-the-art navigation system. It can carry multiple types of warheads against various targets. The test was carried out by Defence Research and Development Organisation. *—PTI*

## Khaleda Zia laid to rest

**DHAKA, 31 DEC**

Tens of thousands of mourners converged to pay their final respects to three-time prime minister Khaleda Zia at Manik Mia Avenue in Dhaka on Wednesday. Zia, who dominated Bangladesh's politics for decades, died on Tuesday. She was laid to rest beside her husband, ex-president Ziaur Rahman. *—PTI*

## Stock markets rally nearly 1%

**MUMBAI, 31 DEC**

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty jumped nearly 1 per cent on the final trading session of 2025, driven by sustained buying by domestic institutional investors and strong gains in Reliance, Tata Steel and Kotak Bank. Value buying emerged in energy, PSU banks, metal, which pushed indices higher. *—PTI*

## BJP wins 2 civic polls unopposed

**THANE, 31 DEC**

Even before the first ballot is cast for Kalyan Dombivli Municipal Corporation polls in Maharashtra's Thane district, two BJP women candidates have won in the absence of a contest. Rekha Chaudhary, a corporator, and Asawari Kedar Navare won from Ward No. 18 (Kachore) and Ward No. 26(A), respectively. *—PTI*

# Gig workers go on strike

## Zomato, Swiggy offer increased payout on New Year's Eve

**NEW DELHI, 31 DEC**

Amid the nation-wide strike called by gig workers' unions, food delivery platforms Zomato and Swiggy are said to be offering more incentives to their delivery partners to ensure minimal disruptions in services on New Year's Eve

Zomato offered delivery partners payouts of Rs 120 to Rs 150 per order during peak hours between 6 pm and 12 am on New Year's Eve. The platform has also promised earnings of up to Rs 3,000 over the course of the day, subject to order volumes and worker availability, sources said.

In addition, Zomato has temporarily waived penalties on order denials and cancellations, they said, however, stressing that it was a standard operating protocol followed during high-demand festive and year-end periods.

Similarly, Swiggy has also increased incentives around the year-end period, offering delivery workers earnings of up to Rs 10,000 across December 31 and January 1.

On New Year's Eve, the platform is advertising peak-hour earnings of up to Rs 2,000 for the six-hour period between 6 pm and 12 am, in a bid to ensure adequate rider availability during one of the busiest ordering windows of the year.

Meanwhile, the Telangana Gig and Platform Workers' Union (TGPWU) and the Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers (IFAT) have claimed that lakhs of workers are set to join the nationwide strike to demand better payouts and improved working conditions.

The strike may affect the operations of food delivery and quick commerce firms like Zomato, Swiggy, Blinkit, Instamart and Zepto on New Year's Eve, when demand is at an all-time high, according to industry sources. *—PTI*

Gig workers stand outside a grocery store to pick up orders amid strike call by unions on New Year's Eve, in Marine Lines, Mumbai **PHOTO: PTI**

- Zomato offered delivery partners payouts of Rs 120 to Rs 150 per order during peak hours between 6 pm and 12 am on New Year's Eve. Swiggy has also increased incentives

# Contaminated water kills 7 in Indore, 100 sick

**INDORE, 31 DEC**

At least seven people died due to diarrhoea and vomiting after allegedly consuming contaminated water in Indore city of Madhya Pradesh. Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargava confirmed this on Wednesday amid conflicting claims over the number of fatalities. Over 100 are hospitalised.

Bhargava said a preliminary assessment suggested that drainage water entered the drinking water pipeline due to leakage. A toilet was constructed above the pipeline, where the leak took place. While he said seven have died, District Magistrate Shivam Verma said doctors have confirmed four deaths.

He said 149 patients have been admitted to 27 hospitals.

Locals claimed at least eight people died in the past one week.

Congress Madhya Pradesh President Jitu Patwari meets a patient **PHOTO: ANI**

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said families of the deceased would get Rs 2 lakh each.

A zonal officer and an assistant engineer of the municipal corporation have been suspended, and an in-charge sub-engineer was fired. *—PTI*

# Govt freezes VI's dues, gives 5-year moratorium

**NEW DELHI, 31 DEC**

The government on Wednesday approved a major relief package for Vodafone Idea, freezing its outstanding dues and approving a five-year moratorium on payments.

The Union Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, agreed to freeze AGR dues of Vodafone-Idea Ltd (VIL) at Rs 87,695 crore, which the struggling company has to start paying from 2031-32 fiscal and clear by 2040-41, sources said.

AGR dues refer to payments owed by telecom companies to the government based on Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR). It is the revenue on which telecom operators must pay license fees and spectrum usage charges.

Besides these, the AGR dues for FY2017-18 and FY 2018-19, which were finalised based on the Supreme Court order of September 2020, will now have to be paid over 2025-26 to 2030-31 fiscal.

Vodafone Idea has been battling a prolonged financial crisis, driven by intense price competition, high debt, massive AGR liabilities, persistent losses, a shrinking subscriber base.

Sources said the decisions taken by the Cabinet were to protect the interests of the government, which now has a 49 per cent stake in VIL. *—PTI*

- The Union Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, agreed to freeze AGR dues of VIL at Rs 87,695 crore, which the struggling company has to start paying from 2031-32 fiscal

## 88 injured as 2 trains collide in Uttarakhand

**GOPESHWAR/ DEHRADUN, 31 DEC**

Eighty-eight people were injured in a loco train collision in the Pipalkoti tunnel of the under-construction Vishnugad-Pipalkoti hydropower project in Chamoli, Uttarakhand, an official said.

One of the trains had workers and officials on board, while the other carried material.

Chamoli District Magistrate Gaurav Kumar said that the accident occurred around 8.30 pm on Tuesday at the TBM (Tunnel Boring Machine) site inside the tunnel being built by THDC (India).

A loco train carrying workers for tunnel excavation during the night shift was about two kilometres inside the tunnel when another loco train coming from the opposite direction lost control and collided with it. It had 109 people onboard. *—PTI*

## WELCOME 2026!

A woman dresses up to party on New Year's eve in Bengaluru **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

## Woman gangraped, thrown out of car in Faridabad; 2 held

**FARIDABAD, 31 DEC**

A 25-year-old married woman was allegedly gangraped in a moving van here and later thrown onto the road, sustaining serious head injuries. Two people have been arrested.

Police said the incident occurred late on Monday after the two accused offered her a lift while she was waiting for transport. Instead of taking her to her destination, the duo drove towards Gurugram and raped her inside the car. Police said the woman was driven around through the night and thrown out of the vehicle that was moving at a speed of over 90 kmph near Raja Chowk at around 3 am.

She suffered severe injuries to her face and head and required more than 12 stitches. Her condition is critical, and she is not yet fit to record a statement, a police officer said. The van used in the incident has also been seized. *—PTI*

# 2025 IT'S A WRAP

**2025 was a punishing year. Planes crashed, stampedes & blasts snuffed out lives, and cities choked with smog. Hundreds died as infrastructure crumbled &, as usual, blame games ensued. SALAR NEWS looks back at 2025 & hopes for a kinder 2026**

## 262 KILLED IN 36 SECONDS AS AIR INDIA PLANE CRASHES

India saw its deadliest tragedies on 12 June when Air India Flight AI-171, a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner bound for London, crashed 36 seconds after take-off from Ahmedabad, crashing into a medical college hostel. The disaster killed 262 people, including 24 on the ground, with one lone survivor. A probe report said both engine fuel switches were moved to the cut-off position shortly after take-off. However, pilots' bodies disputed the findings, alleging conclusions of human error were drawn without sufficient evidence.

## THE BLAST THAT SHOOK DELHI

On 10 Nov, a car exploded near Red Fort in New Delhi, killing 15 people and injuring 20. The govt called it a terror incident. Investigators traced the car to Dr Umar Mohammed, a Pulwama-based doctor, who worked at Faridabad's Al-Falah University. Hours earlier, police raids in Delhi and Faridabad had led to the seizure of 2,900 kg of ammonium nitrate. Four doctors were detained for allegedly planning an attack as part of a "white terror" module. The ED later raided Al-Falah University, arresting its chairman.

## INDI-NO-GO

IndiGo, India's largest and most punctual airline with 65% market share, brought Indian aviation to its knees. Between 2 and 10 Dec, Indigo cancelled 4,000 flights, leaving lakhs stranded. This was due to pilot shortages after Indigo failed to adjust to new govt-mandated pilot duty and rest norms. As fares on other airlines surged up to ₹45,000, govt capped prices, cut IndiGo's ops by 10%, and summoned its CEO. IndiGo issued refunds & ₹10,000 vouchers for the affected.

## THE RCB WIN THAT LED TO STAMPEDE

Eleven people were crushed to death as lakhs of fans thronged to Bengaluru's Chinnaswamy Stadium to celebrate RCB's maiden IPL win. The govt blamed RCB for announcing the celebrations online and giving free passes to fans, while others blamed Congress for inadequate preparation. Officials, including City Police Commissioner B Dayananda, were suspended, as the probe report blamed RCB management and the police. Later, RCB's marketing head Nikhil Sosale was arrested.

## DYSTOPIAN DELHI

In Nov, ahead of Deepavali, the BJP govt moved the Supreme Court to lift the ban on firecrackers. The court allowed fireworks "to preserve tradition", which soon turned Delhi into a gas chamber, blanketed with thick smog. Residents' personal air monitors showed AQI levels touching 800–1,000, while government monitoring stations showed 300–400 as the data was allegedly manipulated by spraying water near them. Air purifiers became essential and breathing Delhi's air was equivalent to smoking 20 cigarettes a day. On 23 Nov, a student protest near India Gate turned violent, leading to 22 arrests.

## NATURE STRIKES BACK

Across the world, natural disasters remained great destroyers and equalisers, demanding their pound of flesh for exploiting mountains, forests, rivers and seas. India was hit by disasters on 331 days in 2025, with at least 4,419 deaths. Flash floods struck Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal and Himachal Pradesh. Andhra Prasdesh Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, and Maharashtra also faced floodings. Wildfires raged in the US, Europe, Australia, and Canada amid record-high temperatures. In March, Myanmar suffered a 7.7-magnitude quake, killing 5,352 people. A 6.0 quake in Afghanistan claimed 2,200 lives. Russia faced an 8.8 quake in July, triggering tsunami alerts for Japan and the US. Floods wreaked havoc across Pakistan, Indonesia, Sir Lanka, Vietnam, Philippines, the US and Nigeria, collectively killing thousands and displacing millions. Heatwaves, wildfires, droughts, and storms reportedly cost the world over $120 billion.

## CRUMBLING INFRA

India prides itself on being the world's fourth-largest economy, allocating ₹11.21 lakh crore to infrastructure, but the ground reality told a different story. In Bihar, at least 9 bridges collapsed. A new overbridge in Bhopal went viral for its 90-degree turn. Newly-made roads cracked hours after light rain. A Rs 12cr road in Rajasthan was washed away before inauguration. Major cities such as Bengaluru, Mumbai and Kolkata saw deadly floods because of poor drainage.

## HEARTBREAKING GOODBYES OF 2025

- DHARMENDRA (1935–2025)
- MANOJ KUMAR (1937–2025)
- GOVARDHAN ASRANI (1941–2025)
- SATISH SHAH (1951–2025)
- GENE HACKMAN (1930–2025)
- POPE FRANCIS (1936–2025)
- OZZY OSBOURNE (1948–2025)

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# POWER SHARING

Infighting in the ruling Congress deepened as its government neared the 2.5-year mark. Party and Opposition leaders claimed there was a "power-sharing agreement" between Chief Minister SIddaramaiah and his Deputy DK Shivakumar. This was fuelled by Congress MLA KN Rajanna, who had already courted controversy by claiming that 70 legislators were "honeytrapped". Rajanna, a Siddaramaiah loyalist, said that there would be a "November revolution" in the Congress. He was subsequently expelled from the Cabinet. Ramanagara Cong MLA Iqbal Hussain also received a show-cause notice from the High Command for saying 100 MLAs wanted to see Shivakumar as the CM for the next 2.5 years. Shivakumar expressed his desire for the CM chair while Siddaramaiah maintained there is no seat-sharing deal. AICC Secretary and Karnataka incharge Randeep Singh Surjewala visited the State in July and met leaders, as Congress told the State cadre to toe the party line. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on 21 December, finally, said that the power tussle is a local issue, and the High Command is not involved.

## INFIGHTING IN BJP

The BJP saw its fair share of infighting for the State President post. Two factions emerged - one rallying behind former CM BY Yediyurappa's son BY Vijayendra and the other, led by Basanagouda Patil R Yatnal, who rejected the "nepotism". Yatnal and several other leaders were expelled from the party for "indiscipline", while first-time MLA Vijayendra was made the State party President.

# Broken roads and promises

BENGALURU'S CRUMBLING ROADS AND PILING GARBAGE TURNED INTO A NATIONAL SHAME THIS YEAR. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION WERE BUSY SOLVING THEIR INTERNAL CONFLICTS, HIGH-PROFILE CRIME CASES SHOOK KARNATAKA'S CONSCIENCE.

## D'STHALA MASS MURDERS

The temple town of Dharmasthala was gripped by controversy after a sanitation worker alleged mass burials, rapes and systemic murders. CN Chinnayya claimed he was coerced into burying over 100 bodies of women and minors — many allegedly victims of rape — between 1995 and 2014.
The State government formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe into the matter. Both Congress and the BJP claimed there was a conspiracy to malign the sacred site.
Over several months, the SIT excavated 17 identified sites. The team found skeletal remains at some sites, but said that they

were primarily male, contradicting Chinnayya's claims.
The SIT then arrested Chinnayya for perjury, alleging he had fabricated evidence, including a skull he produced when making the complaint. However, activists claim a larger conspiracy, citing the high rate of "unnatural deaths" and several sexual assault cases, including Soujanya, who was allegedly raped and murdered in 2012.

## TUNNEL ROAD DILEMMA

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar pushed for a tunnel road connecting Hebbal and Silk Board to ease the City's traffic congestion. However, the BJP, led by MP Tejasvi Surya, termed the Rs 17,780 crore proposal a "VIP project", pointing to the proposed toll and alleging that the road construction would close key corridors for years. The BJP also protested the tunnel road's plan to dig



underneath Lalbagh, highlighting the environmental risks. In December, the government cleared a Rs 2,215 crore "short twin-tunnel" between Hebbal and Mekhri Circle.

## CASTE CENSUS

The State government launched its long-awaited Social and Economic Survey aka Caste Survey. The Opposition objected to the survey, which the Karnataka High Court said was "voluntary". The Congress government claimed that despite all the opposition, technical hurdles and deadline extensions, 96% of rural Karnataka had been covered. However, only 46% of Bengaluru's citizens participated. A significant issue was the sub-caste dilemma. The Congress allowed for non-Hindu religions to declare a sub-caste in the survey, but the Opposition objected, claiming this was not extended to other religions.

## BENGALURU'S CRUMBLING INFRA

Bengaluru's infrastructure woes took centre stage in 2025. The City's potholes, drainage issues and garbage menace grabbed national attention and proved to be a looking glass into the government's failures. Several parts of Bengaluru were flooded yet again in May, following the heaviest rains since 2011. At least three people died in rain-related incidents as flooding brought the City to a standstill. After the water was drained out, citizens were left with a new problem - the roads were barely usable. Potholes snuffed out lives. The government attributed the pothole-ridden roads to heavy rains, but the BJP said the lapse was because of infra funds being used for the five guarantee schemes. Silicon Valley's crumbling infra met the wrath of IT firms too. Investment firm BlackRock relocated from its Belanduru office on Outer Ring Road due to poor infrastructure. Biocon head Kiran Mazumdar-Shar and ex-Infosys CFO TV Mohandas Pai also launched scathing attacks against the Congress govt on X, targeting Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who also holds the Bengaluru Development Portfolio. However, Shivakumar later met Mazumdar-Shaw at his residence in October as their strained ties appeared to mend. Multiple deadline set by the government to fix potholes haven't been met.

## YELLOW LINE FINALLY OPENS

Namma Metro's Yellow Line, connecting 19.15 kms between RV Road and Bommasandra, was inaugurated in August, in a major win for Electronics City's IT crowd

## BANU MUSHTAQ WINS

Banu Mushtaq became the first Kannada writer to win the International Booker Prize for her short story collection 'Heart Lamp', translated by Deepa Bhasthi. The govt invited Mushtaq to inaugurate Mysuru Dasara, but it soon snowballed into a communal issue with the BJP questioning how a Muslim woman could open a Hindu festival.

## STATE'S NEW LAWS

### MENSTRUAL LEAVE

Karnataka became the first state to mandate one day paid menstrual leave for women employees. The scheme applies to private, IT, garment and government sectors and does not require women to submit any medical proof.

### HATE SPEECH BILL

The Karnataka Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill, 2025, passed in December is the country's first law against hate speech, prescribing 1 to 10 years of imprisonment and fines up to Rs 1 lakh.

## FARMERS IN LIMBO, AGAIN

Farmers in North Karnataka were hit by floods, which submerged at least 14.58 lakh hectares of land. Delayed compensation added to their woes. Sugarcane farmers protested against the low prices, which the govt hiked by Rs 100 to Rs 3,300 per tonne, sharing the cost burden with factory owners. The State also appeared to drop the Devanahalli land acquisition project, bowing to the 1,200-day protest.

## COMMUNAL TENSION

Tensions gripped Dakshina Kannada district following several murders. A high profile case was the daylight murder of Hindutva activist Suhas Shetty, which the NIA claimed was an act of revenge for the 2022 murder of a Muslim man. A youth was lynched outside a cricket stadium in Mangaluru for allegedly shouting "Pakistan zindabad" while a Muslim labourer was hacked to death. The State, which had dissolved the Anti-Naxal Task Force, constituted an Anti-Communal Task Force to curb tensions. However, in Mandya's Maddur, tensions escalated due to a stone-pelting incident during Ganesha Chaturthi.

## GBA TAKES EFFECT

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) officially replaced the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), ending its 18-year tenure. GBA included 5 new municipal corporations, with the ward count doubling from 198 under BBMP to 369. The CM sits at the helm of the decentralised three-tier municipal corporation, replacing the Mayor.

## MODERN CRIME

### RANYA RAO

Sandalwood actress Ranya Rao was arrested in March at the Bengaluru airport for trying to smuggle 14.2 kg of gold bars (worth Rs 12.5 crore) from Dubai. She had the gold on her body and attempted to use her father Ramachandra Rao's status as a former DGP to avoid arrest. Ranya is believed to be part of a smuggling ring. Although Ranya claimed that she was forced into the crime, she was denied bail. She allegedly runs a Dubai company which imports gold.

### LOVE AND DHOKA

Dermatologist Dr Mahendra Reddy GS was arrested for allegedly murdering his wife, Dr Kruthika M, by administering anaesthesia without her knowledge. The Victoria hospital dermatologist's phone allegedly had a message he sent to an alleged lover saying, "I killed my wife for you."

### CAVEWOMAN SAVED

In July, Russian woman Nina Kutina and her two daughters were found living in a cave in Ramatirtha Hills near Gokarna. She claimed that she was seeking solitude. Kutina's daughters, aged four and six, had no documentation and had never attended school. Israeli national Dror Shlomo Goldstein approached the Karnataka High Court, claiming to be the girls' father, and urged the court to direct the Centre not to deport the children. The High Court rejected his petition.

# LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

India's neighbourhood turned into its toughest foreign policy test. The nation went to war with Pakistan, ties with Bangladesh soured after its ex-PM Sheikh Hasina sought asylum in India, Nepal burned as GenZ rose, borders continued to stay tense even as Delhi sought to counter China's growing influence in Asia. Salar News looks at how India navigated a tough year.

## PAKISTAN

India and Pakistan had the most intense confrontation since 1971 this year. It all began on 22 April, when five terrorists killed 26 civilians in Pahalgam, J&K. India accused Pakistan of orchestrating the attack. Later, Lashkar-e-Taiba affiliate Resistance Front claimed responsibility. On 7 May, India launched Operation Sindoor to target terrorist infrastructure inside Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Pakistan hit back, and within hours, missiles, drones, and firing was exchanged, defining four days of war. India reported 29 deaths (21 civilians, 8 jawans); Pakistan claimed 40. A ceasefire was announced on 10 May, though its origins became contentious. India said Pakistan asked for a ceasefire through DGMO channels. Pakistan, on the other hand, credited US President Donald Trump. Trump has since claimed over 70 times that he saved India and Pakistan from a fullblown war by threatening both with 250% tariffs. India dismissed Trump's claims and India-US ties have soured since. India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan; both countries closed their airspace. Meanwhile, New Delhi insists Operation Sindoor is still on.

## BHUTAN

On 11 November, a day after the Delhi blast, Prime Minister visited Bhutan to attend the 70th birth anniversary celebrations of the Fourth King. He inaugurated India-funded 1,020-megawatt Punatsangchhu-II hydroelectric project, which he said would increase Bhutan's hydropower capacity by 40%. The visit drew Opposition criticism, with allegations that it benefited Indian conglomerates after Tata Power, the Adani Group and Reliance Power signed agreements with Bhutan's Druk Green Power Corporation.
India announced a ₹10,000 crore contribution to Bhutan's 13th Five-Year Plan. MoUs for cross-border rail links from Kokrajhar to Gelephu and Banarhat to Samtse were signed, along with Bhutan adopting UPI integration.

## CHINA

India-China relationship remains a tug of war. The ties thawed this year with flights resuming between the two countries after nearly five years. Kailash Mansarovar Yatra was back on, and India even restarted tourist visas for Chinese nationals in July.
As India's tariff fight with the US heated up, China quietly slipped into the spot of India's biggest trading partner. One of the year's most viral moments was a video of Narendra Modi beaming with Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin at the Tianjin SCO Summit (in pic) amid a public tiff with "friend Donald" over tariffs.
Ministers Rajnath Singh and S Jaishankar also visited Beijing, breaking a five-year diplomatic drought.
But beneath the smiles, old tensions simmered. China pushed ahead with its giant Brahmaputra dam near Arunachal Pradesh, triggering fears of ecological damage in India. Besides, just before his 90th birthday, the Dalai Lama declared that his successor would be announced soon, to which Beijing said only they had the right to do so. India backed the Dalai Lama. The Congress also claimed that China had taken over grazing lands in Ladakh, but the Centre denies this.

## AFGHANISTAN

While New Delhi had once vowed it would "never be friends with the Taliban", the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan found a new friend in India this year. Afghanistan's Foreign Minister paid a high-level visit to New Delhi in October 2025, the first since the 2021 takeover. India also upgraded its Kabul "technical mission" back to a full embassy.
The visit sparked controversy when the Taliban minister initially barred women journalists from his New Delhi press conference. After public backlash, women reporters were allowed into the press conference. Critics said this cosmetic gesture could not mask the Taliban's curbs on women's lives back home. Afghanistan also announced tax incentives for Indian investors.
Soon enough there were clashes along the Pakistan–Afghanistan border. While Pakistan called it India's "proxy war", New Delhi denied the charge. Afghan FM pledged that Afghan soil would not be used against India.

## NEPAL

Nepal was shaken by Gen-Z-led protests over social-media bans and corruption. The protesters stormed the Parliament. Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli resigned and 36 people lost their lives. Ex-chief justice Sushila Karki, a Banaras Hindu University alumni, became interim PM.
India tightened security along the border as unrest disrupted trade. Tensions spiked in August after India and China agreed to reopen the Lipulekh trade route — a Himalayan pass at the India-Nepal-China trijunction. India maintains the route lies within its territory, while Nepal claims Lipulekh, along with Kalapani and Limpiyadhura, as part of its sovereign territory. The reopening without Kathmandu's consent reignited the border dispute. In November, Nepal added to the friction by unveiling a new Rs 100 note featuring its revised national map that includes the disputed areas. India denounced the act.

## MALDIVES

India–Maldives ties deteriorated in 2024 amid President Mohamed Muizzu's "India Out" campaign, which pushed for removing Indian military personnel from Maldives, reduced engagement with Delhi, and drew Male closer to China. The campaign sought to curb India's security presence and political influence in the Maldives. But 2025 saw a reset. During Maldives' 60th Independence Day celebrations on 25–26 July, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended as Guest of Honour, extended a ₹4,850-crore Line of Credit, eased debt, and enabled Maldives' adoption of India's UPI.

## MYANMAR

India–Myanmar ties remained strained amid the latter's civil war. Despite scrapping of Free Movement Regime in 2024, India saw continued Rohingya inflow and faced UN criticism in May for allegedly "throwing 40 refugees into the Andaman Sea". India, which has no formal refugee policy, maintained that Rohingyas are "illegal entrants". On 13 July, security tensions rose after reports of Indian strikes on insurgent ULFA camps in Myanmar, which the Army denied.
However, it is reported that India is exploring sourcing rare-earth minerals from a rebel-controlled region in Myanmar. Another friction point was cybercrime hubs in Myanmar. A mid-October raid on a KK Park, a notorious hub of data scams, near Myawaddy, displaced 1,500 people, including 465 Indians, who were later repatriated to India.

## SRILANKA

In April, Modi on a two-day state visit to Sri Lanka, met newly elected President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, who awarded him the Mithra Vibhushan, recognising India's $1.36 billion debt restructuring. Dissanayake assured Sri Lanka's territory wouldn't be used against India, yet the partnership remains delicate as China, Sri Lanka's largest creditor, shapes Colombo's choices.

Another point of contention is the rise in arrests of Indian fishermen near Katchatheevu; 66 were detained this year. After calls for India to reclaim the island, Dissanayake affirmed it as part of Sri Lanka. Despite disputes, India sent over 58 tonnes of humanitarian aid under Operation Sagar Bandhu after Cyclone Ditwah killed 600 in Nov-Dec.

## BANGLADESH

India–Bangladesh ties hit a low point this year. The students' uprising in B'desh led to ex-PM Sheikh Hasina seeking asylum in India after which the interim government of Muhammad Yunus veered away from Delhi and cosied up to Beijing and Islamabad. Things truly went downhill when Yunus, on a China trip, declared India's Northeast "landlocked" and hinted that China should get access through Bangladesh. He even handed visiting world leaders maps showing the Northeast as a separate, access-restricted region. Delhi was not amused, economic blows followed.
India slapped restrictions on Bangladeshi garments; Dhaka retaliated with bans on yarns, closing its border and a renewed passion for stalling every connectivity project signed during the Hasina regime.
Bangladesh saw rising radicalisation and attacks on Hindu minorities. Besides, demolition of the ancestral homes of Rabindranath Tagore and Satyajit Ray further strained ties with India.
New Delhi deployed S-400 missile systems and held air drills near the Siliguri Corridor, a fragile 20–22 km "Chicken's Neck" between Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, whose disruption could sever India's Northeast. Now, Dhaka wants India to extradite Hasina, who is facing a death sentence. India isn't saying yes, for now. The issue continues to simmer as Bangladesh is seeing fresh riots in December.

# A NATION WAS TESTED

From fraying India–US ties to allegations of vote theft and historic electoral victories, 2025 tested India on every front. Salar News looks back at the unforgettable events

## FOREIGN TRIPS

PM Narendra Modi went on at least 10 overseas trip in 2025. The govt in Parliament said Modi's trips from 2021-25 cost Rs 362 crore. He started with a tour of France and the US from 10 to 14 Feb. From 15 to 19 June, he co-chaired G7 summit in Canada and then flew to Cyprus and Croatia. His longest tour was from 2 to 9 July, spanning Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Brazil and Namibia. He visited the UK and Maldives in late July, followed by Japan and China in Aug. In Nov, he travelled to Bhutan on 11 Nov, a day after the Delhi blast. The Opposition alleged the visit was intended to benefit the Adani Group and Reliance Power. He attended the G20 Summit in S Africa, before concluding the year with visits to Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman. His first 5 trips cost Rs 67.1 crore, with France alone accounting for Rs 25.59 crore.

## BJP'S BLOCK BUSTER YEAR

Electorally, 2025 was a blockbuster year for BJP. In February, the party recaptured Delhi from Arvind Kejriwal's AAP, winning 48 of 70 seats in the Assembly elections. Rekha Gupta was sworn in as CM. Ahead of polls, AAP leaders, including Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, and Satyendra Jain, faced jail in graft cases. In November, BJP-led NDA won 202 of 243 seats, while RJD-led Mahagathbandhan managed only 35. Nitish Kumar became CM for a record 10th term, with Samrat Chaudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha as Deputy CMs. BJP emerged as the largest party while RJD fell to the third position.

## WHEN WASHINGTON AND DELHI FELL OUT

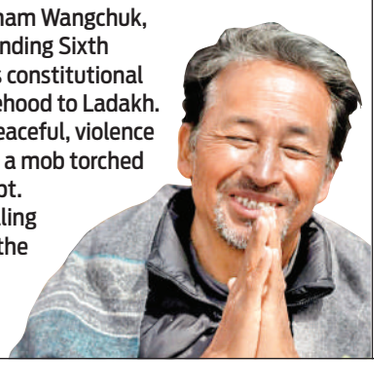
At the start of 2025, few imagined that "besties" India and the US would turn into frenemies. In Feb, the US deported "illegal Indian immigrants" aboard a military jet, with passengers handcuffed and shackled. In April, US Prez Donald Trump slapped a 26% tariff on Indian goods, accusing New Delhi of playing hardball on a trade deal. Matters worsened when Trump imposed an additional 25% tariff over India's imports of Russian oil, accusing Delhi of funding Russia's war on Ukraine. Reliance Industries, the largest buyer of Russian oil, was hit. In Sept, the US hiked H1B visa fees to $1,00,000, hitting Indian techies hard. With trade talks stalled, Modi skipped the ASEAN Summit to avoid an awkward Trump encounter. Relations began thawing in Oct, with India signing a $93 million deal and agreeing to import LPG from the US. Still, strained ties nudged India closer to China and Russia, and ended with President Vladimir Putin's December visit to Delhi.

## CONGRESS SAYS EC, BJP STEAL VOTES

It was in August that Congress MP Rahul Gandhi dropped "a bomb" by alleging widespread voter fraud during the 2024 Parliamentary elections. The 'vote chori' campaign began with allegations of irregularities at Bengaluru's Mahadevapura constituency. The Congress candidate Mansoor Ali Khan lost to BJP's PC Mohan by 32,707 votes. Rahul said BJP had a margin of over 1.14L votes and alleged over 1L fraudulent entries. The Congress alleged similar 'vote theft' in Haryana and Maharashtra, accusing the Election Commission of India (ECI) of colluding with the BJP to help the saffron party win. The EC immediately held a press conference to attack Congress and its allies, while denying all charges. The BJP has dismissed the allegations as politically motivated, while ECI has asked Rahul to substantiate his claims with proof or apologise. Many Opposition leaders have since called for going back to paper ballots.

## SONAM WANGCHUCK: GOVT'S POSTER BOY SENT TO JAIL

Activists in Ladakh, led by Sonam Wangchuk, went on a hunger strike demanding Sixth Schedule status, which grants constitutional protection to tribals and statehood to Ladakh. Although the protests were peaceful, violence erupted on the 15th day when a mob torched the BJP office in Leh on 24 Sept. Security forces opened fire, killing four. Wangchuk was arrested the next day under National Security Act for ant-national activities. He is since in jail.



## BURNT CASH BURNS JUDGE'S REPUTATION

Delhi High Court Judge Yashwant Varma landed in trouble after large amounts of burnt cash, allegedly amounting to ₹18 crore, were found at his Delhi home following a fire on 14 March. Justice Varma denied any link. This sparked questions about corruption in the judiciary, leading an SC in-house panel to recommend his impeachment, the 1st such move against a sitting judge in Independent India. On 21 July, 145 MPs from across parties submitted a memorandum to LS Speaker Om Birla to initiate the impeachment.

## DHANKHAR OUT, RADHAKRISHNAN IN AS VP

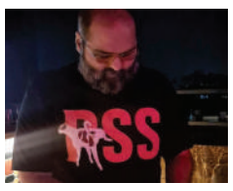
On 21 July, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar resigned hours after he presided over the Monsoon Session of Parliament. While he officially citied health concerns, reports suggested friction with the government. Earlier that day, Dhankhar, as RS Chairman, accepted an Oppn-backed notice to impeach Justice Yashwant Varma, a move that reportedly upset BJP leadership, which wanted to lead the process. Speculation followed about a no-confidence motion against him, prompting Dhankhar to step down. On 9 Sept, Maharashtra Governor CP Radhakrishnan was elected VP.

## SAIF ALI KHAN GOT STABBED

On 16 Jan, Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan was stabbed at his Bandra home in Mumbai during a burglary attempt. Saif was allegedly attacked when he was trying to save his son. He sustained wounds to his neck and spine and was rushed to Lilavati Hospital in an auto by his son, where surgeons removed a knife fragment lodged near his spinal cord. Cops arrested B'deshi man Mohammad Shariful Shehzad in the case.

## KUNAL KAMRA TAKES ON BJP

Comedian Kunal Kamra took BJP head-on in 2025. In March, he uploaded a show on YouTube that infuriated Sena supporters, who alleged he called Maharashtra DyCM Eknath Shinde a "traitor" over the Shiv Sena split. Sena members vandalised Habitat club where the show was held. Twelve Sena men were arrested and released the same day. Kamra, summoned by Mumbai Police, refused to apologise and secured interim bail on 28 March. In Nov, Kamra posted a photo wearing a T-shirt showing a goat urinating on letters BJP leaders claimed represented RSS.




## CJI, A SHOE & HATE

On 6 Oct, advocate Rakesh Kishore threw a shoe at CJI BR Gavai over the CJI's remarks on a Vishnu idol in a temple case. The Bar Council of India suspended his licence and banned him from the apex court. Ironically, on 9 Dec, Kishore himself was attacked with slippers inside Delhi's Karkardooma court complex.

## COMEDY GONE WRONG

2025 turned into one of the worst years for comedian Samay Raina & company. What began as a roast comedy show, 'India's Got Latent' soon spiralled into controversy over offensive remarks. On 10 Feb, YouTuber and show judge Ranveer Allahbadia aka BeerBiceps asked a contestant if he'll watch his parents having sex or join them. The remark was widely condemned as obscene, triggering backlash. FIRs were filed against Allahbadia, Raina, Ashish Chanchlani and Apoorva Mukhija. The NCW and NHRC intervened, YouTube removed episodes, Parliament debated regulation, and Supreme Court called for stricter monitoring of online content.

## 10 STAMPEDES & COUNTING, YET NO LESSONS LEARNT

India witnessed repeated stampedes, due to overcrowding and mismanagement. On 8 Jan, eight died at Andhra Pradesh's Venkateswara Temple during a surge for free darshan passes. On 29 Jan, 30 died at Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, UP, as pilgrims were forced through narrow routes during Mauni Amavasya. Eighteen died at New Delhi station on 15 Feb after train delays caused platform congestion. Six were killed on 3 May at Shree Lairai Devi Temple, Goa, when barricades collapsed, and 11 died on 4 June at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru, during RCB's IPL victory celebrations. Further incidents included three deaths at the Puri Rath Yatra, Odisha (29 June), six at Mansa Devi Temple, Uttarakhand (27 July), two at Avsaneshwar Temple, Uttar Pradesh (28 July), 41 at Vijay's Karur rally, Tamil Nadu (27 Sept) and nine at Venkateswara Swamy Temple, Andhra Pradesh (1 Nov), all linked to crowd-control failures.

## SIR RATTLES INDIA

The Election Commission launched an exercise, Special Intensive Revision (SIR), to verify and update voter lists. It was rolled out a few months prior to the Bihar Assembly polls. There were strong protests and controversy over the exercise, citing lack of transparency, arbitrary deletion of voters' names, and mass registrations of voters at single locations. Under the process, BLOs are tasked with adding eligible voters and removing ineligible ones. However, in Bihar, there were reports of genuine voters being removed from the list, BLOs filing fake forms and people from minority communities being deleted. The issue was dragged to Supreme Court, which backed the EC. The 2nd phase, covering nine states and three Union Territories, began in October. It included poll-bound Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Meanwhile, BLOs have been complaining of heavy workload and instances of BLOs dying by suicide or exhaustion are being reported throughout India. After BLOs' pleas for extension of deadline, the final date for the submission of forms was postponed.

## NEW LAWS IN FOCUS

### WAQF ACT AND PROTESTS THAT FOLLOWED

Seen by many as an erosion of Muslim rights, the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, was passed by the Parliament in April to amend the 1995 law. The Act restricts Waqf Boards from unilaterally declaring properties as Waqf; bars government land from being notified as Waqf, and includes women and non-Muslims on boards. The law faced stiff resistance, with over 65 petitions filed in the SC, which later stayed select provisions. The Act triggered widespread protests across India, with the stir turning violent in West Bengal's Murshidabad.

### SACKING OF JAILED PM AND CMS

The 130th Constitutional Amendment mandates the removal of the PM, ministers and CMs arrested in serious criminal cases. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. As per the Bill, the PM, CMs or ministers can be removed if they are arrested for a serious offence and are jailed for 30 days in a row. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha in August and is being examined by a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

### ONLINE GAMBLING BANNED

India banned online real-money games under the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, in August. The govt said 45 crore users lost ₹20,000 crore annually in online gambling games. The law imposes 3 years' jail and ₹1 crore fine, with repeat offenders facing up to 5 years and ₹2 crore fine. The ban covers fantasy sports, poker, rummy, card games, and lotteries, threatening over 2 lakh jobs and 400 firms.

## CRIME FILES

### The blue drum that gave nightmares

In Meerut, the body of Merchant Navy officer Saurabh Rajput was found sealed inside a cement-filled blue drum on 18 March, two weeks after he returned home for his daughter's birthday. Married since 2016, he was murdered on 4 March by his wife, Muskaan Rastogi, and her lover, Sahil (in pic). The killing triggered copycat crimes, with similar murders involving blue drums reported in Rajasthan's Alwar, MP, and in Punjab's Ludhiana. Reports also surfaced of women threatening their husbands with "blue drums". The blue drum became a viral meme, and a nightmare for many men.

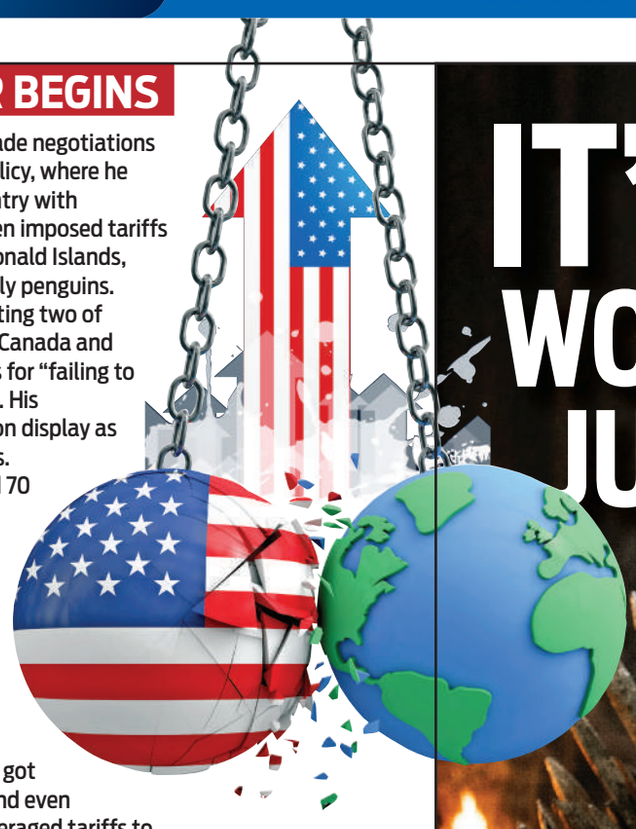
### Honeymoon murder

On 23 May, newly-wed Raja Raghuvanshi, 29, and Sonam Raghuvanshi, 25, from Indore, Madhya Pradesh, went missing during their honeymoon in Meghalaya. On 2 June, Raja's decomposed body was found in a deep gorge beneath Wei Sawdong Falls in a forest. Initially considered a possible accident or abduction case, it later declared a murder. On 9 June, Sonam was arrested after she showed up at a dhaba in UP and surrendered. She confessed to hiring three contract killers and claimed to have plotted the murder with her lover, Raj Kushwaha, an ex-employee of her brother's firm.

# IT'S TRUMP'S WORLD AND WE'RE JUST LIVING IN IT

2025 saw an unhinged Donald Trump 2.0. The US President was sworn in for a second term on 20 January, and the world has not been the same since

## TRADE WAR BEGINS



Trump upended global trade negotiations with his 'America First' policy, where he slapped nearly every country with "reciprocal tariffs". He even imposed tariffs on Heard Island and McDonald Islands, which are inhabited by only penguins.
He started the year by hitting two of America's closest allies – Canada and Mexico – with 25% tariffs for "failing to curb the flow of fentanyl". His unpredictability was put on display as he soon paused the tariffs.
On 2 April, Trump slapped 70 countries with massive tariffs.
He called it 'Liberation Day'.
But a week later, he announced a 90-day pause on the "retaliatory measure". A blanket 10% remained.
Trump claimed the tariffs got US the best trade deals and even stopped wars. He also leveraged tariffs to pressure opponents – he slapped 50% tariffs on Brazil over its trial of ex-president Jair Bolsonaro, who allegedly attempted a coup in his own country. On 7 August, Trump announced fresh tariffs on 90 countries, while hiking the baseline tariff to 15%.
He has since lowered tariffs on some via agreements.
Some countries refused to agree to Trump's terms.
China denounced the "imperialism" and hiked tariffs on America, which after a series of tit-for-tat responses, escalated to triple digits. The two have since agreed to lower tariffs, cemented after Trump's "12 out of 10" meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in October.

## 'FAKE NEWS AND LOSERS': TRUMP VS MEDIA

Trump cracked down on the media from all possible angles. He sued media giants, including the BBC and Paramount, pressured 'Late Night' hosts, used slurs to describe journalists and closed the White House to several organisations. Trump also ordered to cut funding to NPR and PBS. NPR sued him and the case is ongoing.
Paramount, meanwhile, agreed to pay $16 million to Trump to settle the case against former vice president Kamala Harris' '60 Minute Interview'. Trump alleged the trailer was edited to tip the election in favour of Democrats. BBC, on the other hand, edited Trump's speech during the 6 January Capitol Hill riots to make it seem as if Trump directly called protesters to storm the White House. BBC directors stepped down in November.
Trump also went after late-night hosts and his unapologetic critics Stephen Colbert, Jimmy Kimmel and Jimmy Falon, repeatedly calling them "unfunny losers" with "terrible ratings". CBS cancelled Colbert's epic show in July. In September, ABC briefly suspended production of Kimmel's show after his comments on Charlie Kirk's murder. Kimmel's show was back on air shortly afterwards.

## TRUMP'S ICE COLD IMMIGRATION STANCE

Trump's anti-immigration move was anything but diplomatic. Aiming to deport at least 1 million "illegal aliens" in a year, Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) officials began raiding homes, rounding up hundreds of civilians, and holding them in overcrowded detention centres.
In February, Trump began deporting chained immigrants in planes - fuelling global tensions. If the alleged country of origin did not accept the immigrants, Trump would deport them to a third country. Trump also opened 'Alligator Alcatraz' in Florida in April, an ICE detention centre which has become notorious for human rights violations.
Trump deployed the National Guard in several Democrat-led states to hunt for "illegal aliens". Most notable was California, where riots ensued in Mexican neighbourhoods. Trump also launched a series of curbs on visas, including targeting the H1B visa, while opening a 'Trump Gold Card' system.

## TRUMP CUTS USAID FUNDING

Trump announced in March that the US government would terminate 83 per cent of US Agency for International Development (USAID) programmes. A lifeline for millions of people, mainly in Africa and Asia, USAID provided food and medical assistance such as AIDs research, malaria treatment, and vaccinations. Now, at least 10 million could die from preventable causes over 5 years.

## THE GREAT AMERICAN SHUTDOWN

The US government shut down for a record 43 days in October and November. The filibuster was triggered after Democrats and Republicans failed to agree to Trump's healthcare fund cuts. At least 9 lakh federal workers were furloughed and 20 lakh worked without pay. Thousands of flights were delayed or cancelled. Finally, a few Democrats switched sides and passed Trump's bill.

## YOU CAN RUN, BUT YOU CAN NEVER DOGE

Trump launched the Department of Government Efficiency shortly after taking office, placing Elon Musk at its head. It had a group of teenagers and men in their twenties to weed out federal waste. Chaos followed. Experts sounded alarms over potential security leaks, while the men sent texts and emails to thousands of senior employees telling them they were laid off, without justification. When DOGE was disbanded in November, nearly 3,00,000 jobs were cut. The organisation claimed to have saved billions of dollars in federal funding. DOGE targeted the USAID, healthcare workers, and the education department.

## ON AGAIN, OFF AGAIN MUSK AND TRUMP'S SITUATIONSHIP

Tech tycoon Elon Musk and Trump had a public bromance and a louder breakup. Musk was the biggest Republican donor at $300 million for Trump's poll campaign and was the head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). Waving a chainsaw (literally), he promised to cut federal waste. However, in July, the two had a massive spat over the 'Big Beautiful Bill', with Musk claiming that Trump was in the Epstein files. Musk stepped down as the DOGE head. But the two have exchanged kinder words since and were spotted together again.

## TRUMP LOCKS HORNS WITH UNIVERSITIES

Trump wasted no time trying to reform American higher education. He claimed that college campuses are "infested with radicalism". He threatened to cut federal funding to several universities over pro-Palestinian protests, anti-semitism, and asked them to remove their Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) curriculum. He also asked them to curb the number of foreign students. While several universities complied, some, like Harvard, stood their ground. Harvard took Trump to court after he froze millions of dollars worth of funds. Harvard won the case, but Trump plans to appeal.

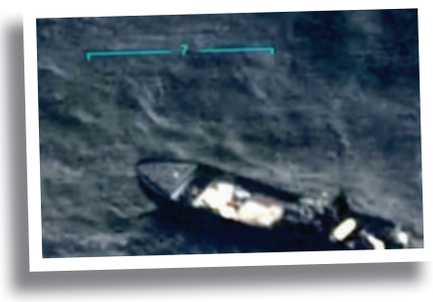
## EPSTEIN FILES: THE AMERICAN HORROR STORY

Late convicted sex-trafficker Jeffrey Epstein's ghost came back to haunt Trump, 6 years after his alleged suicide in federal prison. Courts released new batches of long-sealed 'Epstein files', which shed light on Epstein's vast social network, which included Trump, Bill Clinton, Noam Chomsky, among others. Trump has long denied these claims.

The MAGA camp increasingly split over the Trump administration's handling of the case. The files showed that Trump had spent time with victims he denied any knowledge of during his UK trip. He was later accused of rape too. There were photos of Trump with minor girls and records of him using Epstein's private jet 10 times in the 1990s, raising questions about the sex scandal being linked to beauty pageants endorsed by Trump.
Meanwhile, the Royal family stripped Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor of his Prince title due to his ties with Epstein. Andrew allegedly raped Virginia Giuffre multiple times, including when she was a minor in 2001.
Virginia allegedly died by suicide in April.

## TRUMP BLOWS UP VENEZUELAN SHIPS

In September, the Trump administration began bombing boats in the Caribbean and Pacific, claiming they were drug smugglers bringing narcotics from Venezuela into the US. The strikes killed at least 100 people and hiked tensions with Caracas.



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro claimed that Trump was doing this for a regime change in Venezuela. Trump said he wouldn't mind a regime change, but insisted that he was targeting the "narcostate". He added that CIA was involved and threatened to put US troops in Venezuela. The US has not provided any proof that the those killed were drug smugglers. Even if they were, experts argue that the extrajudicial killings constitute war crimes.

## TRUMP'S PURSUIT OF PEACE

For the first time, the world saw a US President publicly pursue the Nobel Peace Prize. Trump said he deserved it as he claimed to have brokered eight peace deals in 2025. He ended up losing the Nobel Peace Prize to Venezuelan María Corina Machado.
Here are the "peace deals" he claimed to have sealed.
He said he brokered the Israel-Gaza ceasefire, but there have been many violations. His Thailand-Cambodia peace deal fell through, so did the Congo-Rwanda truce. The others on his list are Iran-Israel, India-Pakistan, Armenia-Azerbaijan, Serbia-Kosovo & Egypt-Ethiopia, many of who have dismissed his claims.

## THE KILLING OF CHARLIE KIRK

Turning Point USA co-founder Charlie Kirk was assassinated in September when the Right-Wing activist was debating college students. The killing shook America's conscience. FBI Director Kash Patel falsely announced that they had caught the shooter, only to release the suspect later. The agency eventually caught Tyler James Robinson, who is currently facing murder charges.

# SHOWDOWNS

## TRUMP ALLEGES 'WHITE GENOCIDE' IN S AFRICA

During his meeting with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in the Oval Office on 21 May, Trump held up a list of cards and photos alleging that Afrikaners (White ethnic group) were being persecuted in South Africa. "Death, death, horrible death," Trump said as he showed one photo after another. However, journalists recognised the photos and said that they were from other countries and not South Africa. Ramaphosa has since failed to diffuse the situation.

## COMMUNIST & FASCIST FRENEMIES: DON & MAMDANI

New York City Mayoral-elect Zohran Mamdani took the world by storm with a social media campaign that attacked Trump over affordability, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the genocide in Gaza. Trump responded by calling Democratic-Socialist Mamdani a "lunatic" and a "jihadist". Despite the war of words, Mamdani met Trump in November in the Oval Office and the two appeared to bond. Mamdani called Trump a fascist to his face, while the President laughed.

# WAR & PEACE

**As blood spilled across the globe in 2025, protesters took to the streets bringing 'corrupt' governments to their knees.**

## GENOCIDE IN GAZA

Palestinians in Gaza began their year with hope as US President Donald Trump declared that Israel and Hamas had agreed to a ceasefire. But a few weeks later, Israel PM Benjamin Netanyahu accused Hamas of violating the ceasefire and began raining missiles on Gaza again. Israel cut off aid to Gaza completely.

Israel and US then launched the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation to provide aid, which turned into a death trap. Hundreds of hungry Palestinians were slaughtered while queuing for food. UN claimed Gaza was suffering from famine and accused Israel of committing a genocide. Israel also blocked the largest aid-flotilla, with 100s of activists including Greta Thunberg, from entering.

Trump also reposted AI videos of turning the Strip into a riviera. He announced a 20-point peace deal in October, which contained elements from the video. Aid was restarted and prisoners swapped. At least 300 have been killed since the ceasefire.

## RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Though Donald Trump promised to end the Russia-Ukraine war within days of taking office, Moscow's full-scale assault continued. At least a million have died in three years of the war.

Trump's aggressive meetings with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy showed that the US was no longer a reliable ally.

Trump's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska was just as futile.

While Europe and NATO have had to find ways to fund Ukraine's defence in the absence of American assistance, Kyiv has been riddled with corruption scandals.

The US has tabled a peace deal, which Zelenskyy and Europe initially dismissed as being pro-Russia. The initial deal called for territorial concessions, which Ukraine said a hard no to, and has since been "finetuned".

Meanwhile, Russia has seized key Ukrainian territories - including much of the strategic Donbas - while Ukraine has been striking at Moscow's oil refineries and "shadow fleet".

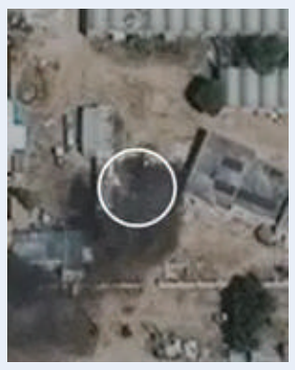
2026 may (or may not) see a truce.

## 12 DAYS OF ISRAEL-IRAN WAR

Iran and Israel saw the biggest military escalation in the modern world in June as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, yet again, accused Tehran of secretly building nuclear bombs and pointing them at Jerusalem. In 12 days, Israel's Operation Rising Lion assassinated Iran's nuclear scientists and senior military leadership and bombed Iranian nuclear facilities. Iran retaliated with drones and missiles, breaching the fabled Iron Dome defence system. The war ended after the US intervened and dropped bunker bombs on Iran, before declaring a ceasefire. At least 1,000 people have died in the conflict which caused global oil prices to spike, leading to fears of supply disruptions.

## SUDAN MASSACRE

Sudan suffered a massive massacre where piles of human bodies and bloodied grounds were captured through satellite images. Paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) seized key cities from the government's Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), including Khartoum in March and el-Fasher in October. The RSF went on a killing spree and the SAF retaliated. The UN called the civil war the world's largest humanitarian crisis. At least 14 million people have been displaced in three-years of civil war.



## PAK, AFGHAN & TERRORISM

Pakistan and Afghanistan relations deteriorated to a new low as Islamabad accused Kabul of fostering Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists. In October, after numerous attacks by the TTP, Pakistan launched massive airstrikes on Afghanistan. The Taliban government attacked Pakistani outposts on the border. People died on both sides. While Qatar and Turkey intervened with a temporary ceasefire, skirmishes continued.

## THAI-CAMBODIA'S FRAUGHT BORDER

Tensions flared over the contested Thailand-Cambodia border. In May, a Cambodian soldier was reportedly killed by Thai military. The then Thai prime minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra phoned Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen and promised that the conflict would not escalate. However, the call was leaked, leading to Shinawatra's resignation in July. Dozens were killed in July, before US and Malaysia-brokered a ceasefire. However, the ceasefire ended in December.

## S KOREA PREZ IMPEACHED

South Korean president Yoon Suk Yeol was impeached and arrested for trying to impose marshal law in December 2024. His wife Kim Keon Heem was also arrested for embezzlement and market manipulation. Progressive leader Lee Jae-myung was elected after June's snap polls and has since tried to push for diplomatic solutions amid the US' trade war and North Korea's nuclear proliferation.

## FRENCH REVOLUTION 2025

France's government repeatedly collapsed under President Emmanuel Macron. The nation saw the 'Block Everything' movement over proposed budget cuts, corruption and diseased cattle. Hundreds were arrested. Among the four Prime Ministers France had in 2025, Sebastien Lecornu served for just one day - the shortest term ever. PM Francois Bayrou's government fell in September after losing a no-confidence vote. Lecornu was reappointed as PM in Oct. The unstable govt failed to pass the 2026 Budget.

## NATIONS LEAN TO THE RIGHT

2025 saw many countries swing to the Right. In Canada, the once-loved Liberal prime minister Justin Trudeau quit in January. His successor, the Conservative Mark Carney was elected in March. In Japan, Liberal PM Shigeru Ishiba resigned in September following losses in Parliament and dwindling public support amid the US trade war. His successor, Conservative Sanae Takaichi, took office in October, making her Japan's first woman Prime Minister. She courted controversy by stating that any Chinese attack on Taiwan would require Japan to respond militarily.

Several Latin American countries also swung to the Right. In Chile, José Antonio Kast won the Presidential elections in December on the slogan "Make Chile great again". Similarly Bolivia elected Rodrigo Paz Pereira, ending two decades of Socialist rule.

The shift in Latin America was bolstered by the Trump-administration which promised Argentina a massive bailout package on the condition that Javier Milei's party won the midterms.

In Europe, Reform's Nigel Farage continued to garner support in the UK, while Elon Musk delivered an anti-immigration speech at far-Right activist Tommy Robinson's rally. Germany's extreme AFD continued to gain ground despite new Chancellor Friedrich Merz's popularity.

## THE RISE OF GEN Z

Gen Z protesters, fed up with corruption and the status quo, spearheaded regime changes across the world and governments collapsed like a pack of cards.

Kenya saw the first wave of Gen Z protests, but President William Ruto cracked down and arrested hundreds of protesters. However, the Gen Z movement in Nepal sparked renewed hope, with protests in Thailand, Peru and Bulgaria forcing government resignations.

The 'One Piece' flag became a symbol of change.

However, public anger did not always bring the change it sought.

At least 700 people were killed in Tanzania after protesters challenged an unfair election. Madagascar saw a military coup seize power after Gen Z protests.

## GOODBYE, POPE FRANCIS

The world's first Latin American Pope, Pope Francis died of a stroke in April. He was 88. His legacy included fighting against climate change, reaching out to LGBTQ+, Catholics, divorced people and migrants, and condemning wars, including those in Gaza and Ukraine. He held Bishops accountable for sexual abuse cover-ups. Pope Leo XIV who succeeded him in May, is the first American to head the Roman Catholic Church.

## LOUVRE JEWELS... GONE IN 7 MINS

The Louvre witnessed one of the world's most audacious heists. In October, four thieves disguised as construction workers used a truck-mounted lift to scale a balcony and enter the museum in broad daylight. In just seven minutes, they stole eight priceless pieces of the French Crown Jewels, including Empress Marie-Louise's emeralds. The stolen gems are valued at approximately $102 million. The gang escaped on motorbikes, with the police arriving 30 seconds too late. Four suspects have been arrested, but the jewels remain missing.

# MARKETS TO BOARDROOMS: 2025 DIDN'T COME TO PLAY

Rupee slid sharply this year, even as the rise of AI cost over 50,000 people their jobs. While the common man was burdened with rising prices, markets saw some of the biggest IPOs & boardroom battles. Salar News looks at what shaped businesses in 2025

## GST 2.0: INDIA'S GREAT DEEPAVALI GIFT

On 22 September, India's GST 2.0 reform bill was approved to combat the steep tariffs imposed by the US. The reforms cut down the four GST slabs of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent to a two-slab structure of 5 and 18 per cent. The Centre said this was to reduce tax burden on citizens and to provide ease of doing business. The govt also introduced a 40 per cent slab on 'sin' and luxury goods and a zero slab for essential goods and services.

## ARATTAI, ZOHO'S MESSENGER APP

Chennai-based firm Zoho Corporation introduced Arattai, a desi version of WhatsApp messenger app that lets users chat and share media with full encryption. Arattai had at least 10 million downloads as on 31 December, 2025.

## THE FALLING RUPEE

The Rupee had a freefall in 2025, sliding from 85.80 at the start of the year to a record low of 90.93 per US dollar on 16 December. With a 5.3% year-to-date drop, it is Asia's worst-performing currency. Analysts attribute the fall to policy uncertainty, delays in the India-US trade deal, persistent FPI outflows and the RBI's restrained intervention. A major driver has been the surge in gold imports, which tripled to USD 14.7 billion, widening the trade deficit and increasing pressure on the balance of payments.

## WORST YEAR FOR ANIL AMBANI

Reliance Group Chairman Anil D Ambani has been accused of multiple bank loan frauds and laundering Rs 17,000 crore. Yes Bank alleged an illegal loan diversion of Rs 3,000 cr between 2017 and 2019. SBI posted a loss of Rs 2,929.05 crore due to an alleged misappropriation by Reliance Communication (RCom) and Anil, who was its then director. SBI, among other banks, classified Anil and RCom's accounts as 'fraud'. On 9 December, CBI booked Anil's son Jai Anmol Ambani and two Reliance firms in an alleged bank fraud case worth Rs 14,852 cr.

## OVER 50,000 WERE FIRED

Mass layoffs surged across industries, with tech, retail, and logistics among the hardest hit. Layoffs came as firms restructured for cost efficiency and pivoted toward AI and automation. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) cut nearly 20,000 jobs, which is roughly 2% of its total workforce. Some of the others that laid off people were: Intel (24,000); Amazon (14,000); Accenture (11,000); Microsoft (9,000); Meta (4,200); Salesforce (4,000); and Google (100). At least 50,000 lost their jobs to AI this year.

## YEAR OF IPOS

**2025 was a busy year for Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) in India, which saw a record 100+ listings, the highest in 18 years. Here are the biggest ones:**

**TATA CAPITAL**
Rs 15,511.87 crore

**HDB FINANCIAL SERVICES**
Rs 12,500 crore

**LG ELECTRONICS INDIA**
Rs 11,607 crore

**HEXAWARE TECHNOLOGIES LTD**
Rs 8,750 crore

**LENSKART**
Rs 7,278 crore

**NSDL**
Rs 4,011.60 crore

**JSW CEMENT**
Rs 3,600 crore

## STARLINK COMES TO INDIA

Maharashtra was the first state to green-light Starlink's rollout in India. The move comes after pushback from Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel, which opposed Starlink's demand for administratively allocated satellite spectrum, which promises internet even in remote areas. The commercial launch is expected in early 2026, with hardware costing ₹34,000 and monthly plans at ₹8,000 with a 30-day free trail.

## THE E20 FIASCO

In 2025, the government rolled out E20 ethanol-blended petrol as a cleaner, greener fuel, with Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari leading the push. Critics argue the policy serves corporate interests. Among the profiteers are Gadkari's sons, Sarang and Nikhil, who head agro firms owning sugar factories such as CIAN. CIAN Agro's revenue surged from ₹17 crore to ₹500 crore in just a year. Critics and even motorists complained of E20 damaging engines and vehicles suffering milleage loss, but the Centre dismissed these claims and said that ethanol was crucial for farmers and import bill cut.

## SONA COMSTAR WILL

The untimely death of actor Karisma Kapoor's ex-husband Sunjay Kapur became the subject of a high-profile inheritance battle. His tech company Sona Comstar's ₹30,000cr empire was at the core of the legal fight involving a contested will that was presented by his widow, Priya Sachdev Kapur. Karisma's children alleged that Priya forged the will. Even as accusations swirl, Sachdev joined Comstar's board, while Kapur's mother alleged coercion to wrest control of the family legacy.

## TATA POWER STRUGGLE

India's most influential philanthropic body Tata Trusts saw a massive showdown. A rift emerged between factions of trustees - supporters of Noel Tata (chairman after Ratan Tata's death) and those aligned with Mehli Mistry, a long-time confidant of Ratan Tata. This dispute involved disagreements over nominations to the Tata Sons board, and the controversial question of whether Tata Sons should go for public listing. A majority vote in the trust board ended Mistry's trusteeship. Mistry responded by filing a caveat with the charity commissioner, signalling he would challenge the decision, but he eventually chose to walk away.

**If you have to go on top of the world, you have to work 90 hours a week. I regret I am not able to make you (workers) work on Sundays, to be honest. If I can make you work on Sundays, I will be happier. What do you do sitting at home? How long can you stare at your wife?**
—**SN SUBRAHMANYAN,** L&T Chairman's comment left India fuming

## QUOTES THAT SET OFF A STORM

**We must work for 9.15 hours a day for five days a week, and if we overshoot this while working remotely, it prompts a trigger... we also believe that maintaining a healthy work-life balance is crucial for both your well-being and long-term professional success.**
—**NARAYANA MURTHY,** Infosys co-founder defends 70-hour workweek

# ORBIT ODYSSEY

Space in 2025 wasn't quiet for a second. India fired up Bahubali rocket, NASA teamed up with ISRO for a billion-dollar mission, celebrities took cosmic joyrides, and astronauts around the world needed rescue plans straight out of a sci-fi script.

## ISRO PULLS A 'BAHUBALI'

ISRO on 2 November launched its heaviest communications satellite, CMS-03 (GSAT-7R), a 4,410-kg Navy satellite, aboard the LVM3-M5 'Bahubali' rocket from Sriharikota. Costing Rs 500 crore, the three-stage heavy-lift rocket will boost secure voice, data and video links across the Indian Ocean. CMS-03's multi-band, multi-mission payload strengthens naval, air and maritime communication networks, enabling seamless coordination between warships, aircraft and remote ocean assets.

## NISAR: ISRO AND NASA'S BABY

India and the US marked a milestone on 30 July with the launch of NISAR, the world's most advanced Earth-imaging satellite, aboard ISRO's GSLV-F16 from Sriharikota. The USD 1.5 billion NASA-ISRO mission is the first to use dual L-band and S-band synthetic aperture radar, offering ultra-high-resolution data. L-band and S-band are two different frequency ranges used in radar and satellite communication. Using both bands together gives richer, more accurate Earth data. Designed to track quakes, floods, crop cycles and even Antarctica's shifting ice, NISAR promises sharper climate insights.

## SHUBHANSHU TAKES INDIA TO SPACE

Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla became the second Indian in space and the first Indian to visit the ISS, after lifting off on Axiom Mission-4 from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre on 25 June, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9–Crew Dragon. The 18-day mission, costing India Rs 550 crore, was a partnership between Axiom Space, ISRO and NASA carrying 60 experiments from 31 countries. Shukla, a 39-year-old IAF pilot from Lucknow with 2,000 flight hours, conducted studies on muscle regeneration, crop viability, microalgae. He returned to Earth on 15 July.

## KATY PERRY GOES TO SPACE FOR JUST A FEW MINUTES

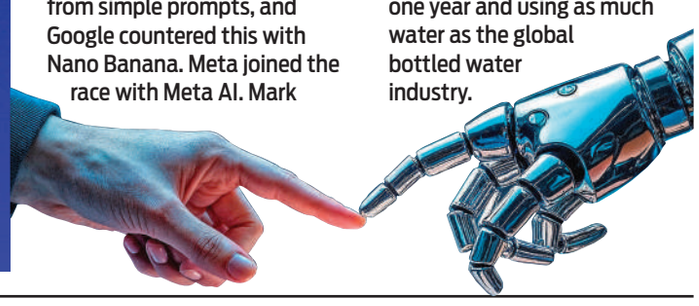
Singer Katy Perry went to space for a few minutes on an 11-minute Blue Origin flight on 14 April. The mission, NS-31, had a female crew and reached an altitude of over 60 miles. But environmentalists pointed out the hypocrisy of an environmental celebrity participating in a flight that worsened global warming.

## SUNITA WILLIAMS STUCK IN SPACE

Sunita Williams returned from space on 18 March, 2025, after spending 286 days in orbit. She and Butch Wilmore landed in the Gulf of Mexico in a SpaceX capsule, ending a mission that lasted 278 days longer than sceduled. They returned on a SpaceX Dragon capsule after their Boeing Starliner developed problems. China rescued its astronauts from its Tiangong Space Station after their vehicle, Shenzhou-20, was damaged. They were rescued using Shenzhou-21 in November. This was followed by the launch of Shenzhou-22 to enable the Shenzhou-21 crew to return.

## AI: NEW BEST FRIEND OR FOE?

The world struggled to keep up with the AI boom as tools such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and Anthropic's Claude became everyday companions. People relied on AI to assist with work, create art and even seek advice. Companies pushed updated versions of the tools almost weekly: OpenAI rolled out GPT-5, GPT-5.2 and ChatGPT Go; Google launched Gemini, Gemini 3 Pro and Flash; and Anthropic issued frequent Claude upgrades. The quality became so good that it blurred the line between reality and AI-generated content. ChatGPT made headlines with its Ghibli-style image generation. This sparked backlash as Studio Ghibli's art takes decades to create. OpenAI soon escalated the race with Sora, its text-to-video tool, which generated videos from simple prompts, and Google countered this with Nano Banana. Meta joined the race with Meta AI. Mark Zuckerberg spent up to $300 million poaching top researchers for superintelligence labs. India emerged as a key battleground, with Perplexity offering free access to Airtel users, Jio giving Gemini Pro, and ChatGPT making ChatGPT Go free for a year. At the centre of this stood Nvidia. Its chips powered data centres, pushing its valuation to $5 trillion. Yet fears of the AI bubble bursting grew. Investor Michael Burry warned of a crash worse than dot-com, while Google CEO Sundar Pichai cautioned no firm would be immune. The boom's dark side intensified ethical concerns. Deepfakes fuelled misinformation, OpenAI was sued after its chats abetted suicides and even a murder. Environmental costs mounted too, with AI firms producing as much carbon as NYC does in one year and using as much water as the global bottled water industry.



# A YEAR OF GLORY AND STRUGGLE FOR INDIAN SPORTS

Indian sports swung between celebration and uncertainty this year. Records were broken, titles were won and new heroes emerged, even as controversies, administrative standoffs, and dressing-room tensions exposed deep fault lines.

## THE HIGHS AND LOWS FOR INDIA UNDER GAUTAM GAMBHIR

2025 was a rollercoaster year for the Men in Blue, with Gautam Gambhir's tenure as head coach coming under scrutiny. India began 2025 with a crushing defeat against Aussies, which ended India's hopes of qualifying for the World Test Championship finals. Under Gambhir, India's Test form deteriorated — 9 losses, 7 wins and 2 draws from 18 Tests. A key factor was Gambhir's insistence on spin-heavy pitches. Unfortunately, the strategy backfired and India lost every Test played on turning tracks. It also reduced the impact of fast bowlers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj. Despite setbacks, Gambhir blamed player failures rather than tactical errors. His reported friction with senior players made the dressing-room atmosphere tense. In May, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli abruptly retired from Test cricket to "focus on ODIs". Both were allegedly pressured to play domestic cricket but had refused. Cheteshwar Pujara followed. Ravichandran Ashwin had already retired in 2024, leaving a void. Selection decisions added to the turmoil - Axar Patel was dropped, players were constantly changed and Mohammed Shami was left out. Shubman Gill was appointed captain across formats, replacing Rohit as Test captain in May and ODI captain in October.

## INDIAN WOMEN MAKE CRICKETING HISTORY

India's women's cricket team created history by winning their first-ever ICC Women's ODI World Cup, defeating South Africa by 52 runs in the final at Navi Mumbai on 2 November. The triumph followed a memorable semi-final win over Australia, powered by Jemimah Rodrigues. In the finals, Shafali Verma's 87 set up India's 298, while Deepti Sharma's five-wicket haul sealed the victory. The win, hailed as women's cricket's "1983 moment", sparked nationwide celebrations and reshaped Indian cricket's narrative.

## ASIA CUP ROW

Diplomatic tensions following the Pahalgam attack spilled onto the cricket field during India–Pakistan Asia Cup matches. India enforced a "no-handshake" policy against Pak. Captain Suryakumar Yadav said it was in solidarity with the terror attack victims. BCCI complained to the ICC over "provocative gestures" by Pakistan players — Haris Rauf's "jet crashing" and Sahibzada Farhan "firing a rifle" — while PCB countered with a complaint against SKY. After India won the final, they refused to accept the trophy from Asian Cricket Council President and Pak Minister Mohsin Naqvi, left the stadium with the trophy.

## MEN IN BLUE CROWNED CHAMPIONS TROPHY KINGS

Indian men's cricket team won their third ICC Champions Trophy when the team led by Rohit Sharma defeated New Zealand in Dubai on 9 March. This was the first time they beat the Kiwis in an ICC final. Rohit was named Player of the Match, and BCCI announced a cash prize of ₹58 crore for the team. While India struggled in Tests, their ODI form was strong, winning 11 of 14 matches. The team remained unbeaten in their first eight games.

## FOOTBALL IN LIMBO

Indian football is in a limbo. A standoff between the All-India Football Federation (AIFF) and Indian Super League (ISL) has led to the postponement of the 2025–26 season. AIFF, recognised by FIFA, is the sport's governing body, while ISL, run by Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL), is a commercial league. AIFF is unhappy with ISL's independent functioning and is seeking control.

The dispute centres around Master Rights Agreement (MRA), which granted FSDL rights of the ISL until 2025. As term ended, differences emerged. AIFF demanded more control, while franchise owners resisted. In April, the Supreme Court restrained AIFF from renewing or extending the MRA. In Sept, the Court directed an open tender for ISL's commercial partner, which fell through.

In December, the 12 ISL clubs proposed a club-owned model, with AIFF as regulator. They offered full control of the league and a yearly ₹10 crore management fee, but the AIFF rejected the offer.

## A NEW HIGH FOR WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Amid a tough year for Indian men's football, the women's national team shone. On 5 July, in Chiang Mai, they stunned hosts Thailand 2–1, topped their group, and qualified directly for the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 for the first time.

## THE INDIAN GAMBIT: A NEW ERA OF CHESS

India enjoyed a landmark year in chess, led by teenage stars. Divya Deshmukh, 19, scripted history by winning the 2025 FIDE Women's World Cup in Georgia's Batumi — India's first-ever title in the tournament. The Nagpur prodigy defeated Humpy Koneru in tie-breaks after drawn classical games, earning the Grandmaster title and a $50,000 prize. In the men's circuit, D Gukesh grabbed headlines by beating World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen at Norway Chess and winning the Grand Chess Tour Rapid title in Croatia's Zagreb. R Praggnanandhaa capped a stellar season by winning the FIDE Circuit 2025 with 115.17 points, qualifying for the 2026 Candidates, rising to World No. 4 spot and clinching the Tata Steel Masters after a playoff win over Gukesh.

## WORLD PARA ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

India's para-athletes shone at the World Para Athletics Championships in New Delhi (27 September–5 October), featuring 2,200+ athletes from 100+ nations. India finished 10th, winning a record 22 medals (6 Gold, 9 Silver, 7 Bronze) and setting three championship and seven Asian records. Highlights included Sumit Antil (men's javelin F64 Gold), Shailesh Kumar (men's high jump T63 Gold), Rinku Hooda (men's javelin F46 Gold), Dharambir Nain (men's club throw F51 Silver), and Ekta Bhyan (women's club throw F51 Silver).

## THE MESSY MESSI EVENT

Lionel Messi's high-profile India tour spiralled into a global embarrassment after chaos erupted at Kolkata's Salt Lake Stadium. Fans who paid over ₹12,000 per ticket expected Messi to interact with young footballers, fans and take penalty kicks. Instead, he was quickly surrounded by politicians and VIPs, cutting him off from the public view. He left the venue in just 23 minutes. Furious fans vandalised the stadium, leading to the arrest of organiser Satadru Das.

The incident reflected deeper organisational failures, with a proposed match in Kerala already cancelled due to mismanagement. While the remainder of Messi's tour in Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai passed relatively smoothly,

controversies followed. In Mumbai, fans objected to India football captain Sunil Chhetri being made to wear a Messi jersey, while Sachin Tendulkar wore one with his own name and gifted Messi a signed one. The Centre was criticised for spending ₹153 cr on the visit while reportedly refusing to shell out ₹35 cr to promote Indian football.

## RECORDS BROKEN, HISTORY MADE

1. Global javelin star Neeraj Chopra finally crossed the elusive 90m mark, throwing a personal best of 90.23m at the Doha Diamond League on 17 May.

2. Jaismine Lamboria (57 kg) and Minakshi Hooda (48 kg) won Gold at the World Boxing Championships in Liverpool in Sept, becoming the first Indians to bag the titles.

3. Eighteen-year-old Sheetal Devi made history in Sept by becoming the first woman armless archer to win Gold in Para World Championship, defeating World No.1 Oznur Cure Girdi.

4. India achieved their best Asian Youth Games performance, winning 48 medals (13 Gold, 18 Silver, 17 Bronze) and finishing sixth in Manama, Bahrain.

5. India hosted the first-ever Kho Kho World Cup in New Delhi in January, with 20 men's and 19 women's teams. India defeated Nepal in both the finals.

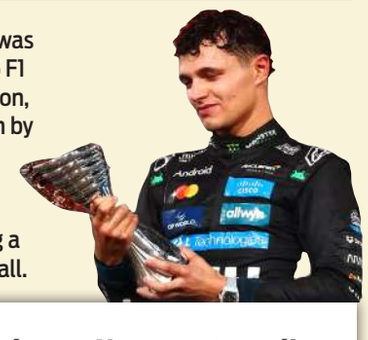
6. The Indian men's hockey team ended an eight-year wait to win the Asia Cup, defeating South Korea 4-1 in Bihar on 9 June & qualifying for 2026 World Cup.

7. NorthEast United clinched the 134th Durand Cup in August, defeating Diamond Harbour FC to secure their second consecutive title in Asia's oldest football tournament.

8. FC Goa clinched the 2025–26 AIFF Super Cup by defeating East Bengal FC in a penalty shootout on 7 December to qualify for the AFC Champions League 2.

9. Jannik Sinner won his first Wimbledon and fourth major game by defeating two-time defending champion Carlos Alcaraz. The pair faced each other six times in 2025, including multiple finals.

10. Lando Norris was crowned 2025 F1 World Champion, edging Max Verstappen by two points. Lewis Hamilton endured his worst season after joining Ferrari, finishing a disappointing 9th overall.



### India tops global doping charts

India topped the global doping chart for the third consecutive year. The World Anti-Doping Agency's 2024 report revealed that 260 Indian athletes tested positive for banned substances, making India the only country with triple-digit violations. Athletics led with 76 cases, followed by weightlifting with 43 and wrestling with 29. The International Olympic Committee flagged the crisis as a serious concern for India's bid to host 2036 Olympic, with India ranking second only to Russia in underage doping violations.

### New sports policy raises eyebrows

The Centre approved the National Sports Policy 2025, replacing the 2001 policy, to make India a "global sporting power" by the 2036 Olympics. The Bill pushes for supporting elite athletes, upgrading infrastructure, using sports science, and promoting indigenous games. Under this law, a National Sports Board will oversee all sports federations. Critics warn that increased government control could lead to overreach. Organisations like the BCCI are exempt from RTI under the law, raising concerns about transparency.